

DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

February 2026

COMMUNITY & WORKFORCE PILLAR

Community Tourism Publication - We created and distributed our first [Tourism News & Insights](#) publication of the year in the February 20, 2026 issue of the Peninsula Pulse newspaper as part of our ongoing community outreach strategy with residents and stakeholders. It was also shared through our partner social media channels. View the [digital version](#). ⇨

Talk of the Town Presentation - We were invited by the Baileys Harbor Community Association to talk about how Destination Door County uses room tax dollars as part of their community-focused Talk of the Town series on Feb. 26. We presented along with Tourism Zone Administrator Juliana Behme. View the [presentation slide deck](#) we shared that evening.



STEWARDSHIP & REGENERATION PILLAR

Community Investment Fund - We [announced](#) the 12th round of grant awards on February 13, 2026, investing a total of \$349,942 to support 7 local projects focused on improving public safety and accessibility, enhancing outdoor recreation, and strengthening cultural assets throughout Door County. Individual project awards ranged from \$8,000 to \$100,000. The total impact of this program since it began in 2023 is currently \$3,455,771 invested into 66 local projects. Find details on every dollar invested in all grant awards at [DoorCounty.com/CIF](#). The first grant application deadline of the year is Monday March 23, 2026, with additional deadlines this year on 6/22/2026, 9/28/2026 and 12/28/2026. We were also able to present ceremonial big checks to three Community Investment Fund grant recipients in February.



Door County Trails Update - We presented to 18 municipalities in February on the Strategic Master Trails Plan and two open houses (Sturgeon Bay + Fish Creek) were held as part of the planning process. As a refresher, Door County Trails is leading a county wide initiative to develop a Strategic Master Trails Plan that brings together decades of planning, visioning, and advocacy into a single, cohesive roadmap for the future of a connected multi-use bicycling and pedestrian trails network in Door County. The online community survey is also still active: <https://forms.office.com/r/DCMPLzqrWQ>.



State Parks Challenge Update - Two of our five state park friends groups (Peninsula/Newport) have met their \$50,000 fundraising goal, so we are working with the other three park friends groups to help get them over the fundraising finish line. We met with the Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park to discuss fundraising opportunities, and also put together some printed materials for the Potawatomi friends group to use in their fundraising efforts.

ECONOMIC VITALITY PILLAR

2026 STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION

DDC staff hosted a public webinar on February 11, 2026 to walk through DDC’s 2026 plans including strategic direction and approach, the new campaign, timing and priority markets, as well as upcoming marketing activations and earned media initiatives. Miss it? You can easily access the [webinar recording](#), a [PDF version of the slide deck](#) that was presented, along with a 2026 Plan [Executive Summary](#) at DoorCounty.com/partnership.



PAID MEDIA

Paid Search continues to be the top-performer, with CTRs ranging from 46-77% above benchmark and notably more volume than last month, while Paid Search maintained similar CTRs MoM despite massive increases in the amount of clicks and impressions. Meta Lead Gen also maintained a similar CTR and generated 36% more leads MoM. The responsive display campaign for Landmark Resort continues to be the most successful co-op campaign by far.

EMAIL

February’s engagement balanced romance and early outdoor planning, with Valentine’s Day Activities leading at 23% of clicks and Hiking and Biking Guide close behind at 21%, signaling interest in both seasonal date ideas and the first hints of spring adventure. Door County Getaways, the Pre-Order Guide, and Journeys End Motel each captured around 17–18% of clicks, showing that readers were exploring both trip inspiration and practical planning.

Lead Gen audiences Performed well, with a 38.4% open rate and a 2.3% click-through rate, Bandwango Leads continue to perform above average, delivering a 50% open rate and a 3.8% click-through rate.

SEO

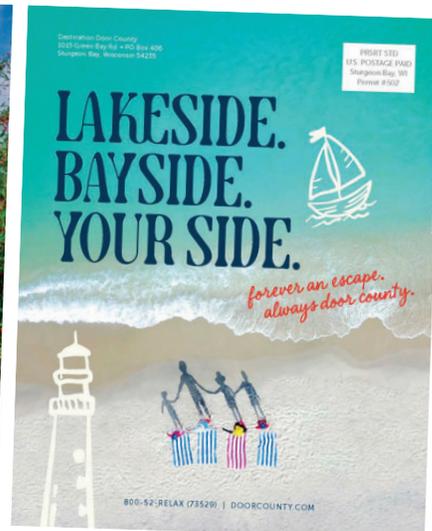
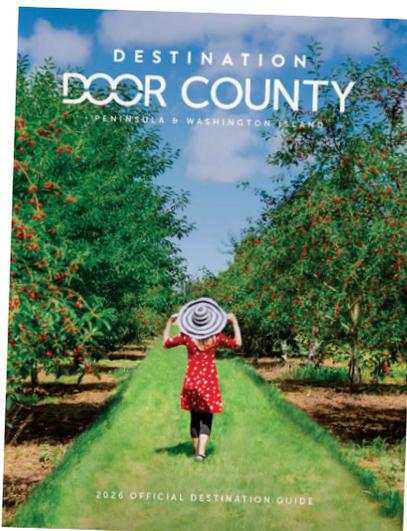
With the February Discover Core Update wrapping up, February saw a slight decrease in organic users year-over-year, mostly driven by a decrease for mobile and tablet. Desktop users increased year-over-year by 2.7%.

Despite this decrease in organic users, the website saw a 19.5% increase in YoY Impressions, drawing in over 1.5 million views within search results for the period. This increase in impressions was driven mostly by searches for “Door County, WI” (41.7% increase YoY), “Door County Vacation Rentals” (729.1% increase YoY), and for users looking for local events and restaurants.

Google’s AI Overviews preferred highlighting Scandinavian Lodging options within AI Overviews, contributing to a 324% increase in AI Citations year-over-year.

2026 DESTINATION GUIDE ⇨

The 2026 Official Door County Destination Guide was released in February, with 180,000 copies produced for visitors and partners. Inspired by our new Swept Away campaign, the refreshed design features hand-drawn illustrations throughout. New editorial features, including Where History Meets Hospitality, Art in Motion, Views from Above, and Picture-Perfect Picnics, offer fresh ways to explore the destination while connecting travelers with local businesses and so much more. An initial batch of 6,378 guides were mailed in February. View the [digital version](#) of the 2026 guide.



Organic Social

Numbers were down on both Facebook and Instagram, but up on TikTok and X. The Facebook numbers we can attribute it to a post from Feb 25' that had over 211k impressions. While both were down we did see follower growth with Facebook adding 282 and Instagram adding 223. On February 27, we launched a weekly fish fry series highlighting local businesses that will run through April 3. We also teased an upcoming "Local" content video series that expands on the guide's "Ask a Local" feature, giving viewers a behind-the-scenes look at locals' work and life in Door County on our Instagram.

Partner Social

We continued to see strong engagement on our partner Facebook page this month with a "Local Love" giveaway for Valentine's Day. We purchased items from businesses across the county to create two baskets that we gave away. To enter, we asked locals to share their favorite business or nonprofit. The post received more than 300 entries. It was a great way to engage our local business community and residents while bringing awareness to our page, resulting in 73 new followers.



Media Highlights from the work of the Destination Door County Team

"15 Fun Girl Trips That Are Close to Home and Worth the PTO" *Midwest Living*, February 9, 2026

USA Today 10Best Nominations made by writers that visited Door County on a press trip.

Fyr Bal Festival - Best Cultural Festival (voting closed), Sister Bay - Best Small Town in the Midwest, Ephraim - Best Small Town Cultural Scene.

PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER

Partnership – February 2026

- Conducted direct outreach and partner visits with businesses including Renard's Cheese, Weinke's Market, Marchant's Meats, Lautenbach's Winery, Door County Coffee, Happy Coffee, Lake Fire Wine, Logan Creek Soap, and Lindal Fisheries to discuss winter business conditions and preparation for the 2026 season
- Supported partner promotion initiatives, sourcing products from several local businesses for the community Love Basket giveaway
- Coordinated with community organizations and nonprofits including Door County Mutual Aid, United Way, and Do Good Door County on food rescue, food insecurity, and volunteer initiatives
- Advanced internal partner support work including 17 sections of the new DDC Board Manual, partner outreach profiles, and planning for a partner survey and database improvements

Welcome Center – February 2026 (Stats)

- Visitors: 705 (February 2025: 762) → ↓ 7.5%
 - Average daily visitors: 25
 - Busiest day: Friday
 - Lowest traffic day: Sunday
- Phone calls: 293 vs. 383 → ↓ 22.1%
- Kiosk sessions: 71
 - Average screens per session: 3
 - Average session time: 3:32
- Gift certificate sales: \$11,795 (↓ \$1,460 / 11.0%)
- Gift certificate redemptions: \$37,405 (↑ \$5,940 / 18.9%)

SAVE THE DATE

- MARCH 19 WEBINAR, 11 AM: WHEEL THE WORLD ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT (VIA GOOGLE MEET)
- MARCH 31 WEBINAR, 2 PM: WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS THE PAY OFF: RESOURCES FOR TODAY'S EMPLOYERS (VIA ZOOM)
- APRIL 14 DDC BOARD RETREAT AT WRITE ON, DOOR COUNTY (JUDDVILLE)
- MAY 5 NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK BREAKFAST EVENT, 8:30-10 AM AT STONE HARBOR RESORT

MEDIA TACTIC DEEP DIVE | February 2026

Google Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

What is it?

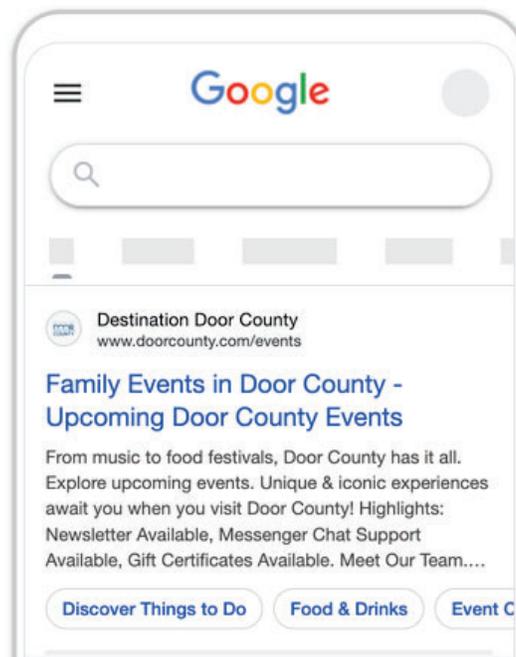
Google Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a digital marketing tactic that uses paid advertising to increase a website's visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs), also known as paid search marketing or pay-per-click (PPC). Google SEM is a great way to capture potential visitors that are actively search for information on Door County.

How does SEM support Door County's marketing efforts?

- Immediate Results:
- Google SEM campaigns can generate immediate results, allowing businesses to quickly increase their online presence and attract potential customers.
- Targeted Audience:
- Google SEM allows organizations to target specific keywords and demographics, ensuring that their ads reach the right audience.
- Increased Website Traffic:
- By appearing at the top of search engine results pages (SERPs), Google SEM campaigns can drive more qualified traffic to a website.

Enhanced Brand Awareness:

- Google SEM can help businesses increase brand recognition and awareness by making their ads visible to a wider audience.



RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - COUNTY-WIDE LODGING

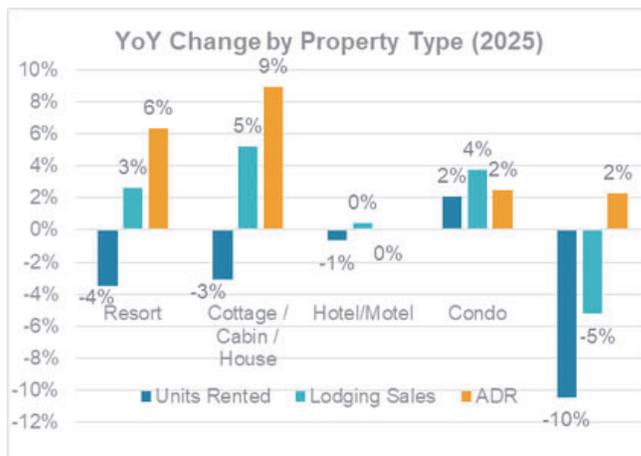
Strong 2025 Performance: Measured 2026 Outlook

Door County’s lodging sector delivered a solid performance in 2025. For the full year, lodging tax collections reached \$12.8 million, marking a 6% year-over-year increase that aligns with overall accommodation revenue gains. Both available and occupied rooms ended the year positively, up 2.5 and 1.5%, respectively. The increase in supply drove down occupancy slightly while the number of occupied rooms was positive for the first time since 2021. A 5% increase in room rates also contributed to the higher revenue gains of 6% in 2025.

Looking toward Q2 2026, initial indicators point to some softening, particularly as booking windows are extended. Short-term rental bookings through early June are down 7% compared to 2025 yet revenue is flat, driven by the continued increase in rates. Short-term rental booking windows are averaging 108 days for the next 90-days, up 11% compared to 2025, potentially making immediate demand appear softer than it may actually be.

Door County Total Lodging* YTD Jan - Dec					
Metric	2024		2025		YoY % Chg
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$	152.7	\$	162.3	6.3%
Average Daily Rate	\$	248	\$	260	4.8%
Available Rooms (000's)		1,390		1,424	2.5%
Occupied Rooms (000's)		616		625	1.5%
Percent Occupied		44.3%		43.9%	-1.0%

Total Accommodation: January – December 2025



While comprising less than 10% of total supply, condo property types outperformed all other property types in 2025 in terms of units rented. Resorts and cabins/cottages/houses as well as condos all had positive revenue growth while hotel/motels were mostly flat, and B&B / Inns declined across all metrics except ADR.

Source: *Total lodging reported by Door County Tourism Zone Commission. Data reported monthly, latest data available is December 2025.

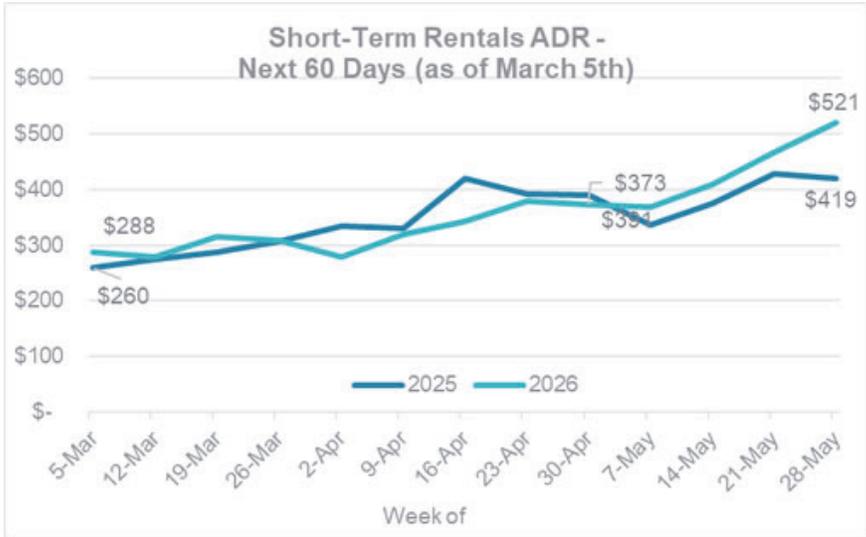
RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SHORT TERM RENTALS

- For the start of 2026, short-term rental revenue was up 19% compared to 2025—totaling nearly \$4 million—driven primarily from a 24% increase in rate.
- Number of active listings has declined some since 2025 resulting in a positive occupancy rate.

Door County Short-Term Rentals** YTD Jan - Dec			
Metric	2024	2025	YoY % Chg
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$ 70.2	\$ 80.5	14.7%
Average Daily Rate	\$ 339	\$ 376	11.0%
Percent Occupied	28.4%	27.4%	-3.5%
Avg Active AirBNB Listings	1,246	1,222	-1.9%
Avg Booking Window	73.9	72.7	-1.6%
Avg Length of Stay	3.3	3.2	-1.2%

Short-Term Rental Outlook

- As of early March, compared to the same time frame in 2025, short-term rental bookings for the next 90-days showed some softening and were down 7% across the next 90 days. ⇨
- Even with an 8% increase in rates, short-term rental revenue was flat for the next 90-days. Occupancy is expected to be down 2%. ⇩

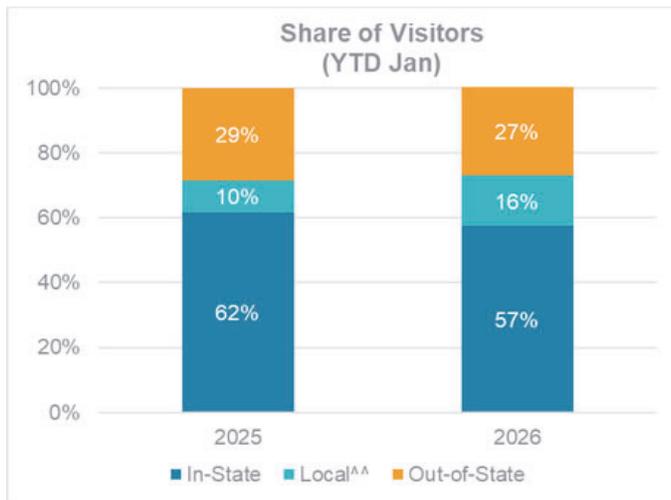


**Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is February 2026.

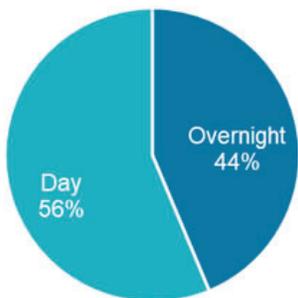
RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - VISITOR BEHAVIOR

Visitor Behavior via Mobile Location Data[^]

- Compared to January 2025, the share of locals increased to 16% while the share of out-of-state visitors declined to 27% and in-state visitors also declined to 57% from 62% last January. ⇨
- In January 2026, 44% of all visitors stayed overnight. The share of in-state visitors staying overnight increased from last year while the share staying from out-of-state declined slightly. ⇩

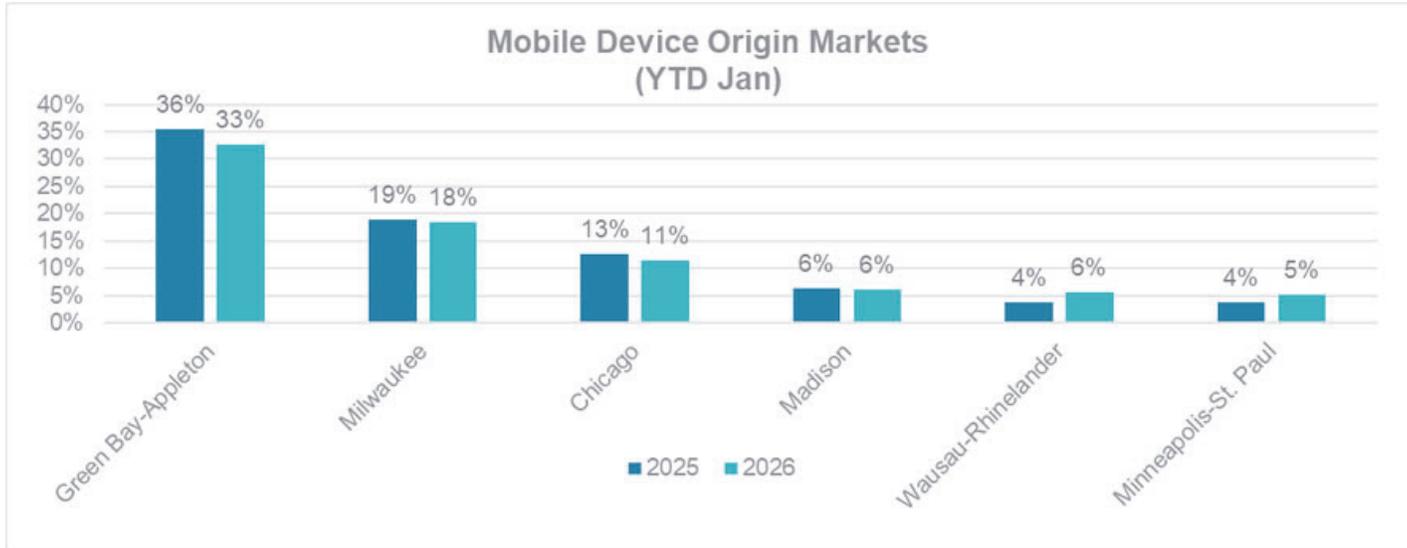


Total Overnight Share 2026 YTD (Jan)



Overnight visitor origin markets were largely consistent with the prior year in January, although the share of visitors from Green Bay, Milwaukee and Chicago were slightly lower, while the share of visitors originating in Wausau and Minneapolis was higher compared to last year. ⇩

Mobile Device Origin Markets (YTD Jan)



[^]Source: Azira mobile location data is collected through the usage of phone mobile apps. It is completely privacy compliant and allows tourism organizations to understand visitor behavior while in destination. Data reported monthly, latest data is January 2026. ^{^^}Locals defined as Door County residents.

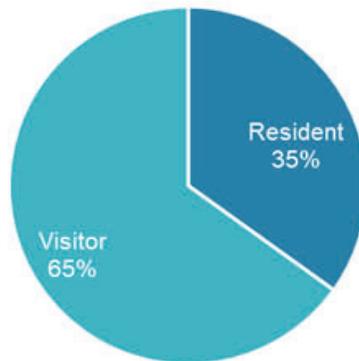


RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SPENDING

Q4 2025 VISA Spending

- Sales tax collections totalled \$6.8 million in 2025, up 6.5% compared to 2024.
- According to Visa spending data, Door County visitors spent \$175.5 million in total for 2025—an increase of 5.5% compared to 2024 with the largest increase in Q2 2025.

Total Visa Spend - 2025 \$269.7 Million



Source: VISA – spending includes residents and tourists, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION. Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is from Q4 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Core Target Markets: Chicago, Milwaukee and Green Bay-Appleton Visitors Contributed to Half of Visa Visitor Spending in Door County in 2025
- Spending increased across all top origin markets in 2025 with St. Louis experiencing the largest increase of 9%.

